Redressal of pensioners' Grievances

945. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that public grievances on settlement of pension benefits are appearing in the media frequently;

(b) if so, whether Government's attention has been drawn to them and any steps taken to redress the grievances of the pensioners in timely setllement of pension benefits; and

(c) the number of cases that have come to the notice of Government on this behalf?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING AND DEPARTMENT OF PENSIONS AND PENSIONERS' WELFARE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) A large number of grievances on settlement of pension cases are received in the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare from various sources and all efforts are made to facilitate settlement of the cases by taking up the matters with the respective Ministries/Departments who are responsible for payment of pension including its revision. The Department of Pension also initiates action on media reports whereever this involves policy/administrative action. As regards individual pensioners' grievances, this Department as the nodal department has directed the Ministries/Departments to set up monitoring mechanism to watch the receipt and disposal of pension cases and is reviewing the pendency with the Ministries/Departments on a continuing basis.

Saving of Funds by Enhancing the Retirement Age of Government Employees

946. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment was made in regard to the saving of funds on retirement before taking a decision for raising the retirement age of Government employees to 60 years;

(b) if so, the details thereof and how much savings could actually have been made; and

(c) whether Government propose to revert the retirement age of Government servants to 58 years and if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor and in what manner Government propose to ease the unemployment problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING AND DEPARTMENT OF PENSIONS AND PENSIONERS WELFARE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) Based on the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission relating to the increase in age of retirement of Central Government employees from 58 years to 60 years, the Government, after taking into account this recommendation and all other relevant factors like fiscal relief to the tune of about Rs. 5,200 Crores in a full year for two years on account of postponement of pensionary benefits, increasing trend of late marriages and longer education span, expectations of SC/ST and OBC employees, world-wide trend to raise the age of retirement, impact on employment opportunities, etc., decided to accept the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission and raised the age of retirement of the employees of the Central Government. The age of retirement of the employees of the Banks and Central Public Sector Undertakings has also been raised from 58 to 60 years. Orders to this effect were issued on 13.5.98. In addition, the age of retirement of armed forces and personnel of Central Para Military Forces was also raised by two years. The Ministry of Finance have reported that no data has been collected by them to arrive at the actual savings.

There is no proposal under consideration to reduce the age of retirement of Central Government employees. The age of retirement has no one-to-one relationship with the employment opportunities and as such the increase in age of retirement has not affected the overall employment market. Even prior to increase in age of retirement, large number of employees of the Central Government belonging to Group 'D' and workmen category; pre-1969 bank

employees; scientific and technical personnel, school teachers and a section of Doctors used to retire at the age of 60 years. The vacancies in these cadres continue to be available for fresh recruitment further reducing the impact on unemployment.

With opening of the infrastructure sectors like telecom, power, roads, communication, posts etc. to the private entrepreneurs, the employment opportunities have increased considerably.

To ensure that unemployed youth are not put to disadvantage, the maximum age of entry into Government service through open competition has also been increased by two years.

As per the Ninth Plan, a number of employment generating schemes are likely to be implemented which will further increase the employment opportunities. However, no separate statistics regarding retirement and growth related vacancies State-wise, in this regard, are maintained centrally.

Dharnas and Demonstrations by Employees

†947. SHRI RAGHAVJI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether those employees are considered as delinquent employees who perform peaceful dharnas and demonstrations etc., after continuously neglected by their Associations of Service, as a last resort in order to get their demands fulfilled;

(b) if so, the number of such employees who were punished/ indicted in the year 1999 on account of reported delinquency;

(c) if not, whether certain instrumentalities have been authorised to do so; and

(d) if so, the details of such instrumentalities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING AND DEPARTMENT OF PENSION AND PENSIONERS' WELFARE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) In accordance with the

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.